

We conducted two studies designed to investigate how people remember emotional pictures of social and non-social content. In one study, we assessed free recall and found main effects of emotion, social content, and a significant interaction between emotion and content. The interaction revealed that both positive and negative emotion enhanced the memory for pictures with social content, but only negative non-social pictures showed a similar enhancement. In the other study, we assessed recognition memory and failed to find any main effects or interactions when based on hit rates, false alarm rates, accuracy, response bias, or remember/ know responses. Since emotional differences in recognition memory are sometimes limited to high confidence memory responses, we reanalyzed this subset of data. However, we still failed to find any evidence of emotional differences in recognition memory. In contrast, we found two main effects of content that did not interact with emotion. Specifically, we found that non-social content was associated with greater false alarm rates and a more liberal response bias than social content. Although our recognition data revealed no significant emotional differences, our recall study suggests that emotion enhances memory. We discuss our inconsistent results across the two studies within the framework of dual-processing theories of memory.